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Report on
The Survey of Socio-Economic Conditions of The Scheduled Tribe Population Living within Mini Compact Areas in The Autonomous Hill Districts of Assam

(JINAM-VALLEY M. C. A. P.)

SPONSORED BY
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER, HILLS,
GOVT. OF ASSAM

ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
FOR
TRIBALS AND SCHEDULED CASTES
BELTOLA, GUWAHATI-28

Research for Tribals and
Jawahar Nagar,

PREFACE

Shifting cultivation otherwise known as Jhuming has been practised by the tribal communities living in the hill areas of the North Eastern States including two hill districts, Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills of Assam since time immemorial. Jhuming has been regarded as a way of life of the hill tribal people and many festivals, religious rites, etc. are associated with it.

At the same time it is a well recognised fact that shifting cultivation is detrimental to ecological balance and a healthy environment. There are many evil effects of shifting cultivation. During the planned economic development of the country attempts have been made to wean away Jhumiyas from shifting cultivation by introducing a good number of new programmes formulated by the Planning Commission as well as the Tribal Development Division of the Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India.

In the hill areas of Assam also several attempts have been made to rehabilitate the Jhumiyas in permanent cultivation and also in other development schemes. 'Composite Project', 'Integrated Jhumiya Development Projects', Compact Area Projects', etc, are some of the programmes that have been implemented in the hill areas of Assam.

Recently a new approach has been accepted by the Govt. to wean away the Jhumiyas from shifting cultivation. Mini Compact Area where programmes are proposed to be undertaken for a limited number of tribal villages in a small compact area is a new approach in this regard. The present report on the Survey of Socio-Economic Conditions of the Tribal People living in the Mini Compact-Area of Jinam Valley (Mini Compact Area Project) in North Cachar Hills District is an outcome of the new approach. The Mini Compact Area programme is proposed to be introduced in 4 Mini Compact Area of two Hills Districts - 2 in each District. This survey has been conducted by our Institute with the financial help and other support from the Development Commissioner, Hill Areas of Assam. This survey covers a wide variety of subjects that would help the authorities in implementing the schemes with a better understanding and the data presented in the survey would also help them in assessing and evaluating the results of the implementation of the schemes.

The survey work was carried out by Shri G.N.Das, District Research Officer, Diphu with the help of Research Investigators, appointed on Adhoc basis, under my over all guidance.

I am grateful to Shri M.S.Pangtey, I.A.S., Development Commissioner, Hills, and Shri R. Zaman, Project Co-ordinator in the Office of the Development Commissioner, Hills for giving financial assistance for the purpose of conducting the survey. I am also thankful to Shri G.N.Das, District Research Officer, Diphu, and the Research Investigators working under him for completion of the survey as a time-bound programme. My thanks are also due to the North Cachar Hills District Council authority for offering help and co-operation in conducting the field survey.

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Dated Guwahati
the 1st May, 1991.

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SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

THE AREA:

The Project Area, Jinam-Valley, is situated in the North Cachar Hills District of Assam and is very close to the Assam-Manipur border.

The Project covers 10 villages in the Valley. Except one of them(Chelei), the rest are situated in highlands. The elevation of the Project Area ranges between 300 to 1300 metres (approx.).

There are three tribes inhabiting the Project Area -- the Hmars, the Zeme Nagas and the Kukis. The Hmars are numerically dominant group followed by the Zeme Nagas and the Kukis respectively.

DEMOGRAPHY:

The total population in the Project Area is 2333; out of this 1198 (51.4%) are males while 1135(48.6%) are females. The general percentage of literacy is 50.2 (male 60.6 and female 39.4). Christianity is the major religion in the Area having 92% followers out of the total population.

INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES:

The communication system is not satisfactory. There is a P.W.D. Kutcha road connecting almost all the villages but can be used by jeeps only under fair-weather condition. Absence of a bridge over Jinam keeps the vehicular traffic off this road. The nearest motor-head is Kumarchera, 35 Km. away from Chelei.

There is a Camp of 5 Assam Police Battalion at Baladhan. The drinking water system meant for this camp has been extended into a network to provide drinking water in the other villages in the Valley.

Besides 9 Lower Primary Schools, 2 Middle English Schools and 1 High School, there are a Post-Office and a LAMPS Office in the Project Area. The only weekly market (Wednesday) takes place in Chelei. A few fair-price shops along with small retailers are also present.

The Project Area lacks the provision for electricity.

THE ECONOMY :

The people in the Area are basically agriculturists and largely depend upon jhum (93% of the total households). Besides jhum, they do wet-cultivation wherever possible, even by constructing terraces. Many of the villagers have developed fruit orchards that provide them a steady income. Poultry and Piggery are also practised, which is a part of their tradition too.

Among the household industries, bamboo and cane work is an unavoidable part of the day-to-day life of the people. Almost all the able male persons involve themselves in basketry works. The other important industry is weaving. The textile products are generally meant for Self-consumption.

Out of 375 households in the Project Area, 324 are above the Poverty Line while 51 are below it (the Indian Standard being Rs. 6,600 per annum).

The extent of indebtedness is negligible.

CHAPTER - I

THE BACKGROUND

THE PROJECT :

Shifting cultivation, more popularly known as 'jhuming' is the major and most widely practised means of livelihood among the highland tribes of North-east India. As jhuming involves the slash-&-burn technique, it causes deforestation. It has become great concern in the present times because of the fact such a practise disturbs the ecological balance and accelerates the occurance of many problems like soil erosion floods in the plain areas, etc. Moreover, it is felt too, that the poor yield of the jhum harvests is one of the significant reasons of the economic backwardness of the people concerned.

To overcome these problems, the present project has been taken up. It has been named as the MINI COMPACT AREA JHUM CONTROL PROJECT and it includes four areas of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills Districts. These are - Miyungdisa Area, Hidipi Area (both in K.A. District), Digher Kuki Area and Jinam Valley Area (both in N.C. Hills District). The project aims to rehabilitate the families in the selected areas through permanent means of livelihood, such as wet cultivation, animal husbandry, sericulture, fishery, cottage industries etc. and to keep them away from jhum.

Prior to this Project, several attempts had been made to control jhum cultivation in the hill areas of Assam. The Planning Commission introduced an interdisciplinary programme during the Fifth Five Year Plan called "Composite Programme". It was planned to cover various aspects like Land Reclamation, Minor Irrigation, Extension Plantation Crops, Afforestation,

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Supply of Agricultural inputs, Development of infrastructure such as roads. Under this Programme a "Compact Project" was taken up and it aimed to settle a specific number of jhumiya families by providing the facilities of cash-crop programme during the Fifth Plan itself. As the lack of proper projectised approach caused many shortcomings, it was replaced by Integrated Jhumiya Development Programme (IJDP). This Project had covered the provision of reclaimed or terraced land with irrigation facilities, construction of worksheds for weaving, tailoring, knitting, carpentry etc, and establishment of nurseries for selling seedlings and some other alike common economic benefits. It also included individual family-oriented schemes. Large Area Multi Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) were set up to open retail outlets in the vicinity of the concerned villages for easy procurement of rice and other essential commodities.

Besides-IJDP, the two District Council have also implemented the compact Area Development Programmes to solve the problems connected with jhuming. Change is desired to bring in the life of 1488 nos. of households belonging to 36 villages in Karbi Anglong (Chinthong Development Block) and 1,076 Nos. of households of 40 villages in N.C. Hills (Jatinga and Diyung-Valley Blocks). As a compact area becomes too big due to sparse habitations, the two District Councils have also taken up the Mini compact Area Projects. Jhum-control is the focal concern of these Projects and if they become successful the authority may decide it to be continued further in place of the compact Area Programme.

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METHODOLOGY :

The survey for the present project was done by visiting each of the villages included in the project Area. Data were collected chiefly through structured interviews with the help of schedules, Of course, personal observations of the investigators have also been utilized in the preparation of the report.

THE AREA ;

Jinam-valley is one of the selected areas covered by the project. It includes ten selected villages situated in the southern most part of the Haflong sub-division of North Cachar Hills District. The entire area is very near to the Assam-Manipur border and is covered with high altitude hills that form the southern flank of the Barail Range. The highest elevation reaches the level of 1700 metres (approx.). The N.C. Hills District was born as a sub-division of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District on the 17 November, 1951. It became a new civil district on 2 February, 1970 with Haflong as the Headquarters. What is significant about this district is that it has a multi-ethnic population. The total population is 76,047 out of which 69.14% are tribals (1971)*. The major groups are dimasa Kachari, Hmar, Kuki and various Naga groups, The non-tribal population consists of Assamese, Bengali, Bihari, Nepali and others. Christianity has the second highest number of followers (21.87%) following Hinduism (77.03%) as per 1971 census.

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* There was no census in Assam in 1981.

Jinam-valley is one of the constituencies of N.C. Hills District Council. The ten selected villages that constitute the Project Area are :

1. Chelei
2. Muollien
3. Tattephai
4. Ramvom (local name Gamuom)
5. Phaiphui
6. Baladhan
7. Duijung (new name Namrengram)
8. Leiri
9. Purana Hmar Lushai
10. Nutan Hmar Lushai.

The Infra-structural Facilities:

Communication : Except Chelei, all the other villages are highlands within the range of altitute between 300 and 1300 metres (approx.). Chelei is situated by the river Jinam and hence is how-a-days known as Jinamghat. It serves as the gate-way to the Valley as it is linked with Kumar-chera, the nearest motor-head for external communication, through a Kutcha motorable road. The distance is about 35 Km.

But the communication situation in the rest of the valley is a grim one. Though the official maps of the valley show a P.W.D. road upto Sonkhai in the easternmost part of the Valley, in reality, it is a kutcha strip upto Leiri which can be used by jeeps only in fair-weather condition. Moreover because of lack of a road bridge over Jinam, no vehicle could enter the Valley till the other day. Presently, due to improvement works of the jeepable strips, a temporary bamboo structure has been constructed for truck movement across Jinam. Of course, the people in the Valley have to walk for travelling purposes still today. Even the 5 Assam Police

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Battalion Camp at Baladhan receives their routine ration and mails through government porters who carry the goods from Mahur. Chelei is connected with the Valley through a foot-bridge. There is a post-office at Leiri that remains under lock & key for most of the time.

Drinking Water: The 5 A.P. Battalion Camp has become of great benefit for the people in the Project Area regarding drinking water provision. The pipe-line of drinking water to the Camp at Baladhan has been extended to a network to provide drinking water in the other villages too. Thus the entire Valley, including Chelei, is connected with a public drinking water system. Of course, at present the system is dormant in Ramvom-Tattephai-Phaiphui section, Apart from this system, people depend on the [redacted] streams to meet the requirement.

Markets: The absence of transport facilities has made Chelei the main commercial centre for the Valley. It is the place where the only weekly-market takes place (Wednesday). Moreover, the fair-price shop in Chelei serves the entire valley. Of course, a few small shops can be found in the Project Area.

Various Establishments: There are several educational institutions along with a few other establishments in the Project Area. There are 9 Lower Primary Schools(each village having one except Duijung), 2 Middle English Schools(at Leiri and Tattephai), and 1 High School (at Leiri). Besides these there are an L.P. School, an M.E. School and a High school in Boro-Arkup (2 Kms. from Chelei), which are attended by many students from the Project Area. It is noteworthy that schools were introduced in Jinam Valley a long time back by the Missionaries. At present, the M.E. School in Tattephai

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is the only Missionary run institution. The others are managed by the District Council and the State Government.

The public establishments other than educational institutions include a primary Health centre, a Veterinary sub-centre and a LAMP Co-operative Society. The former two are situated in Boro Arkup while the LAMP office is in Chelei.

THE PEOPLE:

The ethnic composition of the Project Area is constituted of three tribal groups- the Hmars, the Kukis and the Zeme Nagas. Though the Hmars and the Kukis are found to inhabit a single village, no such evidence has been found in case of the Hmars and the Zemes.

The total population of the Project Area is 2333. A very significant aspect regarding the people in the Area is that 92% of the total population are Christians. It is noteworthy that this major portion of the people, irrespective of tribes, have modified their way of life in a large manner. Such modifications have been possible only due to the provision of education from an early date under the Missionary initiative. It has also helped in the induction of a "Western" notion in the Psycho-cultural make-up of the people.

Let us have a brief account of each of the tribes inhabiting the Project Area.

THE HMARS:

The etymological meaning of the term 'Hmar' is north. The Hmars are the people who live in the north of the Mizo Hills. Though the Hmars are considered as a Lushai-Kuki group, there is a controversy regarding its position in this group.

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To some scholars, it is a Lushai tribe while to some others it is a Kuki tribe. There are still others who consider the Hmars as an independent tribe. Besides, the scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Amendment) Act 1976 has enlisted the Hmars as a Scheduled Tribe in the two Autonomous Hills Districts. Racially, the Hmars show Mongoloid features.

On the basis of the reference to the "Sinlung Civilization" in their traditional songs and folklores, it has been inferred that the Hmars were the inhabitant of Sinlung, somewhere in central Asia. In a later period they were forced to leave Sinlung by the superior Chinese immigrants and subsequently, they entered the Indo-Burmese frontiers through the Shan State. As the entire Lushai-Kuki group had moved together, they are often regarded as the single Kuki-chin tribe at this point. Evidences of encounters among the various factions of the Lushai-Kuki group regarding settlement have been cited and finally, it is said, the Hmars established their villages in the Mizo Hills (present Mizoram), Cachar and North Cachar Hills areas of Assam, Tripura and Manipur.

A unique feature in the Hmar social life is the prevalence of joint families, which is not preferred by the other tribal groups in this region. They are patriarchs and strict follower of monogamy. The entire tribe is divided into a number of clans, each of which is an exogamous unit. Provisions of divorce, window remarriage and bride-price are present. Traditionally the Hmars believe Pathien to be their High God. They bury the dead.

A Hmar village is composed of pile-dwellings. The village Council consists of the Chief (lal), the chief Assistant (khawnbawlupa), the Assistants (khawnbawls) and the village elders. The Council, presided over by the chief,

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settle all the disputes. The village is surrounded by the jhum-fields. The Hmars are shifting cultivators, paddy being the major crop grown by them. Apart from paddy, other crops like maize, sesame etc. along with various vegetables and spices are produced. Fruits are also produced. Rice is the staple food of the Hmars.

The Hmars have their traditional dance, music, dress and ornaments. Weaving is a major household industry which is a female-craft. The Hmar women were experts in pottery-making in the past. At present, this practice has been given up totally. Of course, much of the traditional practices have been given up due to the acceptance of Christianity by a major portion of the Hmars. Christianity has provided them an 'open-mind' through education and the 'western-notion'. The Hmars of the North Cachar Hills area too are adapting themselves to the rapid social changes brought about by modern civilization.

THE KUKIS :

The Kukis are one of the tribes included in the Kuki group of the Lushai-Kuki clan. In the scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe List of 1976 (Amended) contains 37 tribes under the Kuki group. In early census reports, the Lushais, the Kukis and the Hmars were treated as allied groups without any clear-cut distinction. On the other hand, in practice, is impossible to represent a composite account of these, tribes as each of them has its own ethnographic identity. Racially, the Kukis are Mongoloids.

The Kukis are patriarchs as well as monogamous. They have several clans with loose exogamy-marriage within the clan is discouraged but not prohibited. Bride-price is

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prevalent while provisions for divorce and widow remarriage exist. The traditional belief system speaks of a pantheon that include the evil spirits controlling various diseases and the High-God.

The Kuki villages have hereditary chiefs with unlimited power and undisputed authority. The villages are composed of clusters of pile-dwellings surrounded by the jhum-fields. In these fields paddy, maize, sesame, cotton and various vegetables and spices are grown. Wet cultivation is also done wherever possible. Rice is the staple food of the Kukis. Fruit orchards are present; pineapple, orange and banana are the major products.

The Kukis are said to be experts in carpentry and blacksmithy, not to speak of weaving and basketry. They also practise cattle-rearing, poultry and piggery.

Due to the wide-spread christianization among the Kukis, lot of the traditional behaviours have been eliminated. Because of educational facilities provided by the Missionaries since an early date, the people have become "Conscious" about the modern world and are gradually adapting themselves to this new set-up.

It is noteworthy that like the Hmars, the Kukis also have various legends referring to 'Sim-lung', a place on the bank of river Mekong in South west China. It is said to be the original place of the Kukis which the, had to leave. They moved to the Irrawadi Valley through the Shan State. Because of their habitation in the Chin Hills, they are known as the Chins in Burma. In their downward movement they were obstructed by the Bay of Bengal and hence diverted their heading towards north and crossed the Lushai Hills (present Mizoram). This they got scattered in Cachar, North Cachar Hills, Tripura, Nagaland and Manipur.

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THE ZEME NAGAS :

The Zeme Nagas are originally a Naga tribe from Nagaland. After the fall of the Kachari Power in the Greater North Cachar Hills area, the Zeme Nagas became the victim of frequent attacks of the Angami Nagas. Hence, the Zemes from the border area migrated westward and settled down in the North Cachar Hills area. This incident occured in the 18th Century A.D. At present, the Zeme Nagas have been recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in the District of N.C. Hills. Physically, the Zeme Nagas show the Mongoloid features.

The Zeme Nagas follow patriarchal system along with monogamy. They prefer nuclear type of family. The Zemes of N.C. Hills have six clans, each of them being an exogamous unit. Cross-cousin marriage is preferred, bride-price is prevelent and provision for divorce is present.

A very distinctive feature in the traditional life of the Zeme Nagas is the morungs -- the youth dormitories. The bachelors dormitory is called hangseuki while the spinsters one is called leoseuki. A boy or girl is initiated to the morung as soon as he or she crosses the age of eight and has to sleep there until he or she gets married. None of the morungs is allowed to be visited by the members of opposite sex. These dormitories serve as a recreational cum-training centres for the youngsters. It is a major device of the enculturation process. Moreover, the morungs are also used as the guest-houses.

The Zeme Naga villages are generally situated in hilly areas. The houses are pile-dwellings. There is a village Council, headed by the village Chief called Matai, to look after the public matters. The villagers are shifting cultivators and major crop grown by them is paddy as rice is

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the staple diet. Besides paddy, Maize, various vegetables, spices and other crops are grown. Fruit orchards are also developed where pine-apple, guava, orange, banana etc. are produced. They rear mithuns, cattle, pigs, and birds too.

As per the traditional religion of the Zemes, there is a supreme God with eight subordinate Gods responsible for various aspects such as wealth, agriculture, health etc. Witch-craft and the practice of black-magic are also found in the Zame tradition. At present, due to ever-widening impact of Christianity, various traditional practices have been given up. A very striking example in this regard is the morung. Now-a-days, these have been transformed into youth clubs.

Among the three tribes inhabiting the Project Area, the Hmars are the dominant group. A very distinctive feature in the present Hmar way of life is that they have totally given up the drinking habit, even liquour-brewing. It is a remarkable impact of Christianity. The other groups do not show total absence of drinking-practice. Of course, a few exceptions among the Hmars in this regard cannot be denied.

The ethnographic material have been collected from -

* Bordoloi, B.N. - 1972 - District Handbook United Mikir & N.C. Hills Guwahati, T.R.I.

* -do- - 1988 - Tribes of Assam (Part-II) Guwahati, T.R.I.

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Table I shows some important facts about the Area and the People.

TABLE I

THE VILLAGE PROFILE

Sl. No.	NAME OF THE VILLAGE	TOTAL HOUSE-HOLD	TOTAL POPU-LATION	ETHNICITY	RELIGION	DISTANCE FROM CHELEI
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	CHELEI	46	244	HMAR, KUKI ORIYA, NEPALI	CHRISTIANITY HINDUISM	0 Km.
2	MUOLLIEN	62	374	HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	3 Km.
3	TATTEPHAI	37	190	HMAR, ZEME NAGA	CHRISTIANITY	15 Km.
4	RAMVOM	38	191	KUKI HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	8 Km.
5	PHAIPHUI	42	272	HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	17 Km.
6	BALADHAN	48	312	ZEME NAGA	CHRISTIANITY HINDUISM	10 Km.
7	DUIJUNG	30	187	ZEME NAGA	CHRISTIANITY HINDUISM	18 km.
8	LEIRI	42	341	HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	18 km.
9	P.HMAR LUSHAI	15	131	HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	25 km.
10	N.HMAR LUSHAI	15	91	HMAR	CHRISTIANITY	25 km.
		375	2333			

The table shows that there are 375 households with a population of 2333 in the Project Area. Muollien is the largest of all the villages with 62 households and 374 persons. The table also shows that 92% of the total population are Christians. Hinduism is more prevalent among the Zeme Nagas. There are only two non-tribal households in the Project Area who reside in Chelei.

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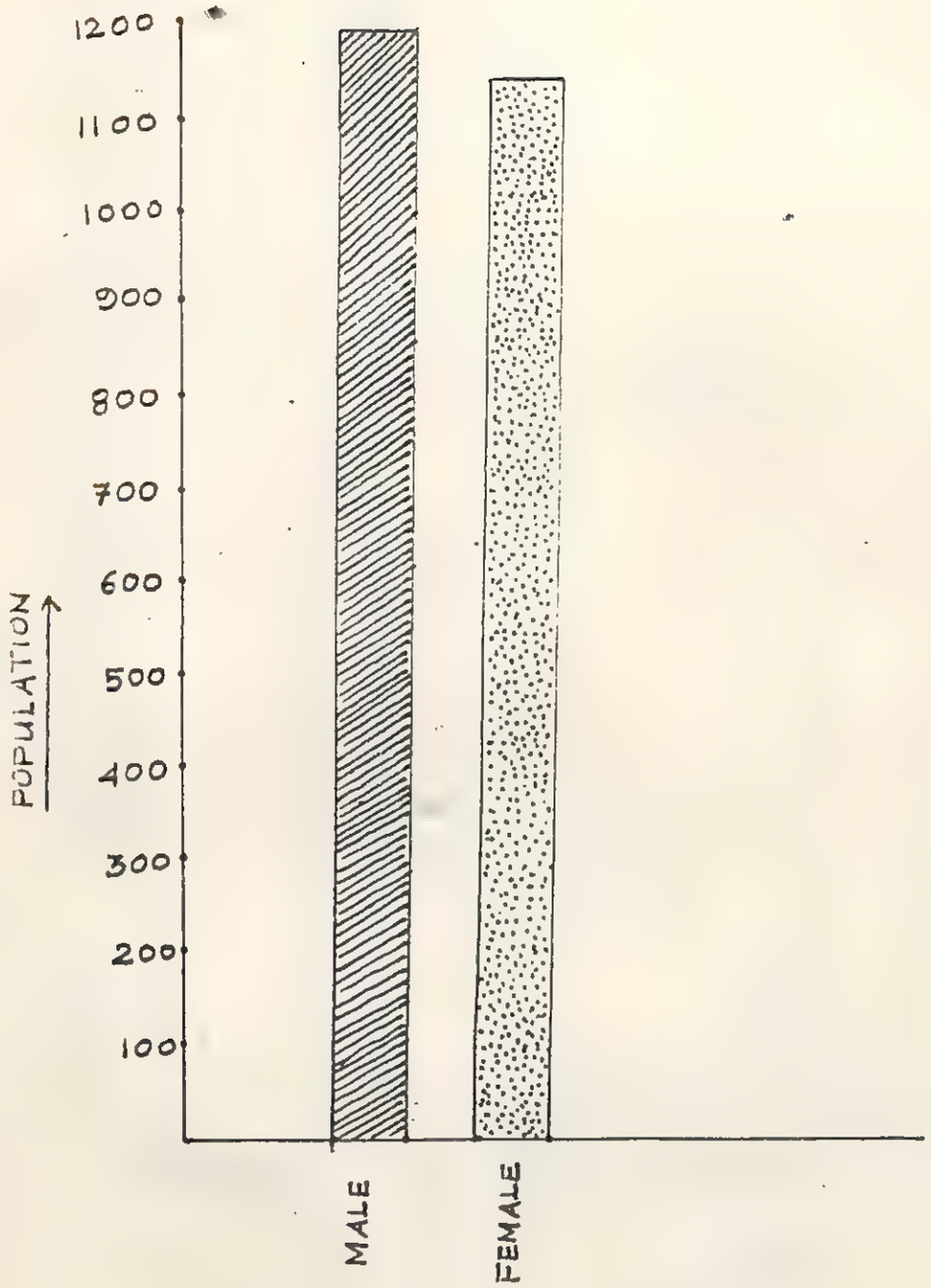

THE SEX RATIO

population in the Project Area.

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CHAPTER - II

STATISTICAL PROFILE

Demography :

The following table indicates the statistical view of the demographic pattern of the Project Area.

Table - II

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN

Sl. No.	Village	Population			Age Distribution					Total
		M	F	Total	0-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61+	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	CHELEI	121	123	244	106	65	51	16	6	244
2	MUOLLIEN	187	187	374	154	112	65	31	12	374
3	TATTEPHAI	88	102	190	80	51	34	17	8	190
4	RAMVOM	105	86	191	84	62	29	13	3	191
5	PHAIPHUI	135	137	272	136	56	53	17	10	272
6	BALADHAN	165	147	312	139	96	48	22	7	312
7	DUIJUNG	90	97	187	91	42	35	14	5	187
8	LEIRI	181	160	341	141	98	45	33	24	341
9	P.HMAR LUSHAI	80	51	131	70	26	23	11	1	131
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	46	45	91	37	27	13	10	4	91
		1198	1135	2333	1038	635	396	184	80	2333

Table-II shows the demographic pattern in the Project Area. Out of total 2333, 1198 persons are males (51.4%) while 1135 are females (48.6%). Muollien has the largest population of 374 with equal number of male and females. N. Hmar Lushai, on the other hand, shows the lowest number of villagers having almost equal number of males (50.5%) and females (49.5%). Chelei, Tattephai, Phaiphui and Duijung show the female population to be greater than the males.

Literacy:

The Table-III shows the educational status of the population in the Project Area.

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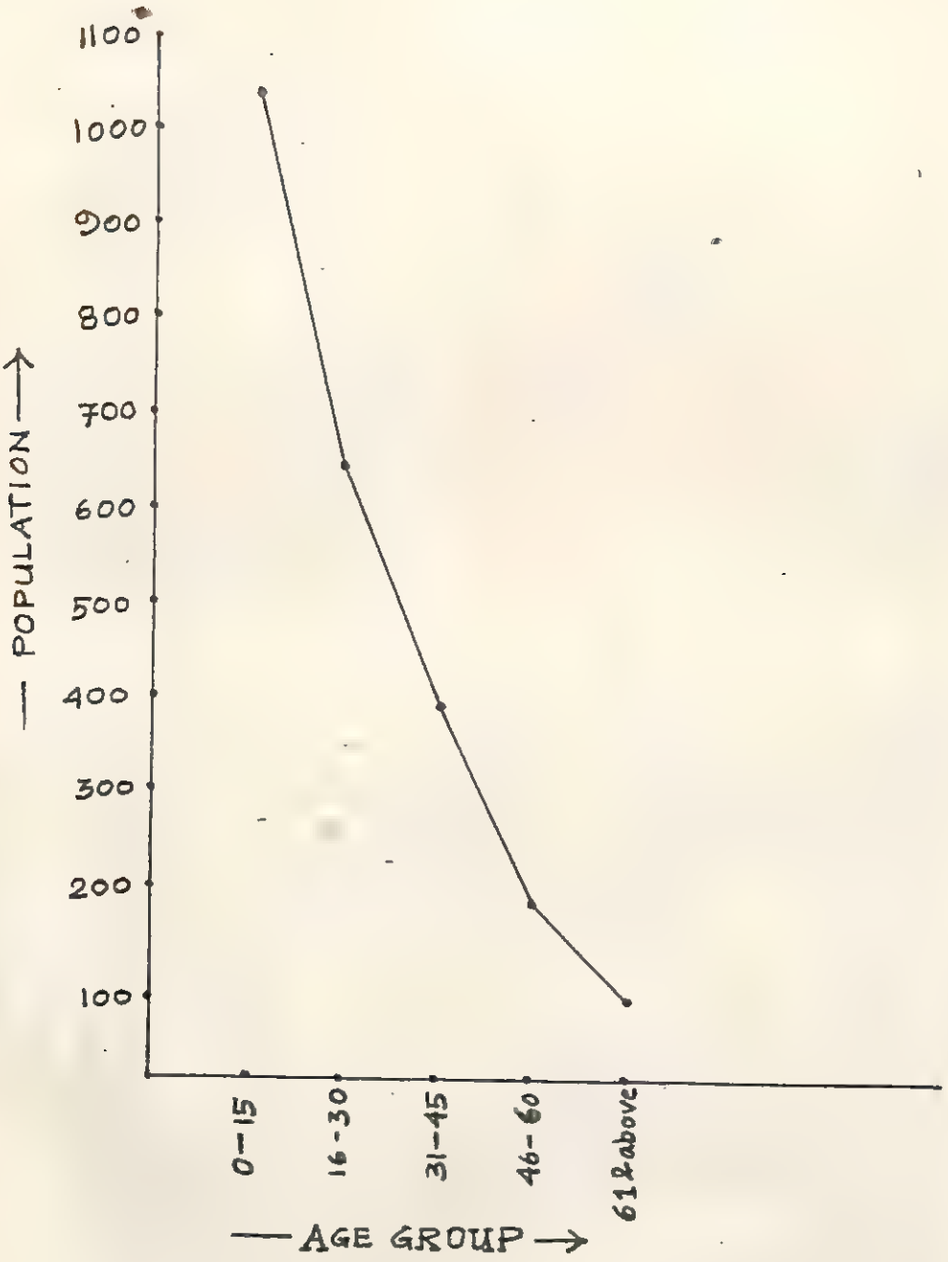

PATTERN OF AGE DISTRIBUTION

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Table - III

LITERACY POSITION

Sl. No.	Village	Primary			M.E.			Under Matric			Matriculate +			Total literate					
		M.	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M		F		Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	CHELEI	33	30	63	38	25	63	19	4	23	0	0	0	89	60.1%	59	39.9%	148	60.7%
2	MUOLLIEN	42	50	92	46	39	85	39	15	54	6	3	9	133	55.4%	107	44.6%	240	69.2%
3	TATTEPHAI	18	17	35	16	6	22	5	2	7	2	0	2	41	62.1%	25	37.9%	66	34.7%
4	RAMVOM	40	18	58	16	7	23	10	6	16	0	0	0	66	68.0%	31	32.0%	97	50.8%
5	PHAIPHUI	28	30	58	12	14	26	25	9	34	6	5	11	71	55.0%	58	45.0%	129	47.4%
6	BALADHAN	49	34	83	28	5	33	16	2	18	4	0	4	97	70.3%	41	29.7%	138	44.2%
7	DUIJUNG	15	17	32	22	5	27	9	4	13	2	0	2	48	64.9%	26	35.1%	74	39.6%
8	LEIRI	36	27	62	21	23	44	41	26	67	14	3	17	107	57.8%	78	42.2%	185	54.3%
9	P.HMAR LUSHAI	13	5	18	7	2	9	5	9	14	2	0	2	27	62.8%	16	37.2%	43	32.8%
10	M. HMAR LUSHAI	15	16	31	10	4	14	4	0	4	1	0	1	30	60.0%	20	40.0%	50	55.9%
		288	244	532	216	130	346	173	77	250	37	11	48	709	60.6%	461	39.4%	1170	50.2%

Table III shows that 50.2% of the total population are literates out of which 60.6% are males whole 39.4% are females. Muollien shows the highest literacy while P.Hmar Lushai shows the lowest. The meason for the lowest literacy in P.Hmar Lushai may be due to the fact that over 53% of the total population are under the age gropp of 0 to 15 years and many of them are yet to join an educational institution. Moreover, the lowest female literacy in Baladhan may be because of prevalence of Hinduism. In general, the table indicates a fair percentage of female literacy in each of the villages.

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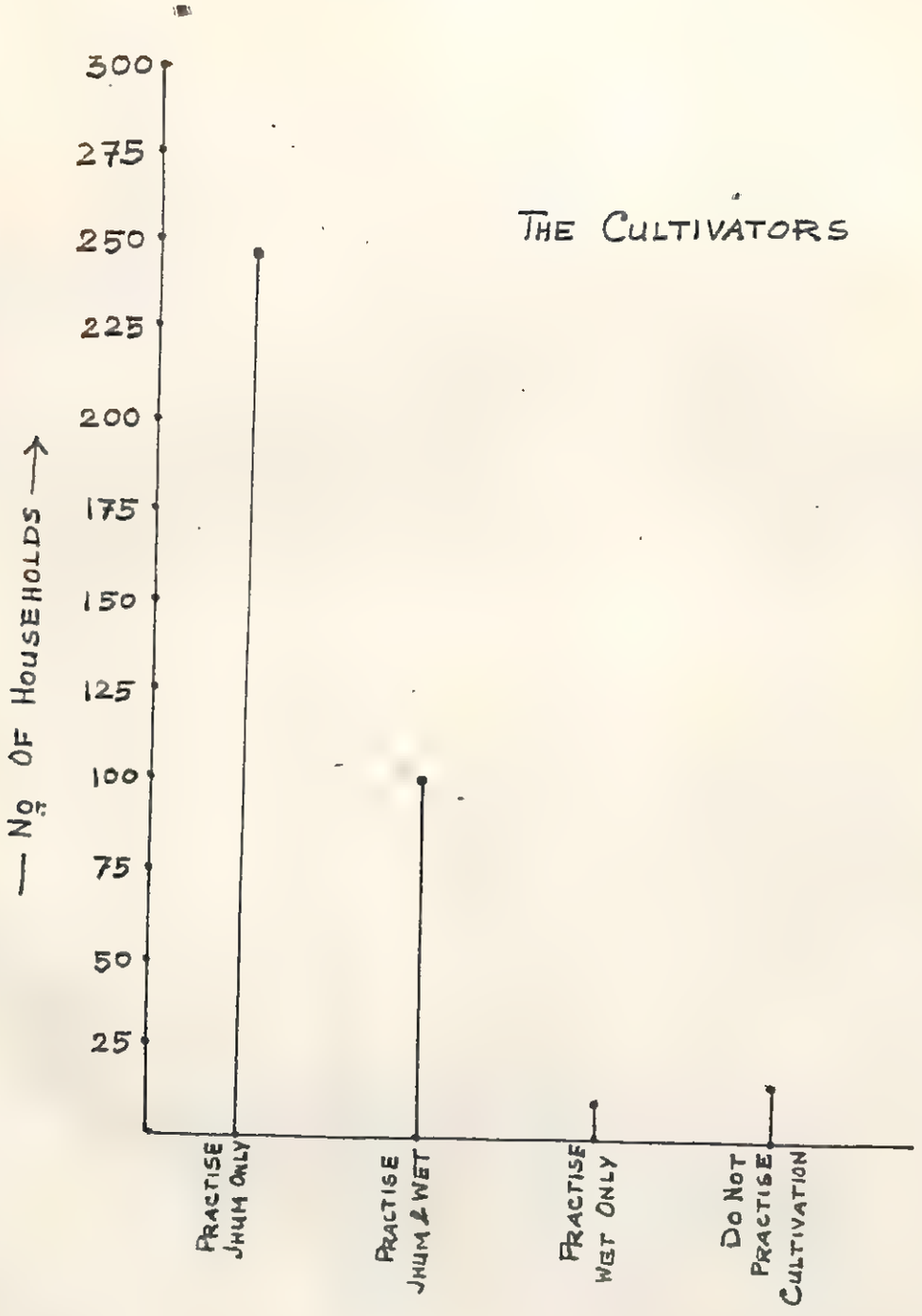
THE CULTIVATORS
No. OF HOUSEHOLDS
300
275
250
225
200
175
150
125
100
75
50
25
PRACTISE JHUM ONLY
PRACTISE JHUM & WET
PRACTISE WET ONLY
DO NOT PRACTISE CULTIVATION

Conta...16/-

It is worthwhile to note that the total literates include the current students numbering 675 (57.7%) out of which 378 are males (56%) and 297 are females (44%).

Economy:

A. Table-IV shows the distribution of Jhum and Wet cultivators in the Project Area.

Table - IV.

THE CULTIVATORS IN THE PROJECT AREA.

Sl No	Village	Households								Total households
		Practising Jhum only		Practice both Jhum & Wet		Practice only wet		Donot practice cult.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	CHELEI	27	58.7%	12	26.1%	0	0	7	15.2%	46
2	MUOLLIEN	14	22.6%	38	61.3%	8	12.9%	2	3.2%	62
3	TATTEPHAI	34	91.9%	1	2.7%	0	0	2	5.4%	37
4	RAMVOM	24	63.2%	8	21.1%	1	2.6%	5	13.2%	38
5	PHAIPHUI	36	85.7%	6	14.3%	0	0	0	0	42
6	VALADHAN	11	22.9%	36	75.0%	1	2.0%	0	0	48
7	DUIJUNG	30	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
8	LEIRI	42	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
9	P.HMAR LUSHAI	15	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
10	N.HMAR LUSHAI	15	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
		248	66.1%	101	26.9%	10	2.7%	16	4.3%	375

This table indicates that 95.7% of the households are cultivators and 4.3% are non-cultivators who are teachers, Mission Servant or small-scale businessmen. Among the cultivators, 66.1% of the total workers are jhumiyas without practising wet cultivation, 26.9% practise both jhum and wet while only 2.7% solely depend on wet cultivation. As per the table, Duijung, Leiri, P.Hmar Lushai and N. Hmar Lushai show total absence of wet cultivation as these are situated in higher altitude regions without any suitable plots for the purpose. Non-cultivators are higher in Chelei and Ramvom.

It may be mentioned here that the total working force in the Project Area is 1295 (55.5% of total population). Each person above 15 years of age is considered as a worker, contributing in the family economy directly or indirectly.

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E. The following table shows the Land Utilization Pattern in the Project Area.

Table - V.

LAND UTILIZATION PATTERN
(In Bighas)

Sl. No.	Village	Land Under Jhum	Land Under Wet	Land Under Terrace	Land Under Fishery	Fallow Land	Others*	Home-stead	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	CHELEI	363	92	0	2	51	35.5	69	612.5
2	MOULLEIEN	319	496	12	4	2	81	60	974
3	TATTEPHAI	403	12	0	2	0	27	40	484
4	RAMVOM	253	65	10	0	18	20	47.5	413.5
5	PHAIPHUI	475	51	0	0.5	116	57	79	778.5
6	BALADHAN	264	206	0	0	38	59.5	60	627.5
7	DUIJUNG	214	0	0	0	0	50.5	33	297.5
8	LEIRI	313	0	0	0	0	75	36	424
9	P. HMAR LUSHAI	51	0	0	0	0	8.5	11	70.5
10	H. HMAR LUSHAI	94	0	0	0	0	14.5	8	116.5
		2748	922	22	8.5	225	428.5	443.5	4798.5
		57.3%	19.2%	0.46%	0.18%	4.7%	8.9%	9.2%	

* Others Include Horticulture and Fruit Orchards.

Table-V shows that 4798.5 bighs of land have been utilized for various purposes in the Project area. Out of these 57.3% have been used for Jhuming, 18.7% for wet-cultivation, 0.18% for fishery, 8.9% for horticulture and fruit orchards. The villages situated in higher altitudes, i.e. Duijung, Leiri, P.Hmar Lushai, H.Hmar Lushai, shows toatl absence of wet cultivation and Fishery.

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The interest of the villagers in developing fruit orchards is a significant feature. Each of the villages has several fruit orchards. The major among the fruits grown are orange, banana and pineapple. People are also interested in horticulture.

C. Apart from agriculture, animal husbandry is a traditional habit of the people in the Valley. Of course, pigs and fowls are the two major species found to be domesticated. These are chiefly kept for self consumption. Animals are sold only at the time of severe financial crisis. Which of course, occurs occasionally.

Table - VI

LIVE-STOCK POSITION.

Sl. No.	Village	Bullock	Cow	He-Buffalo	She-Buffalo	He-goat	She goat	Sheep	Fowl	Pigeon	Duck	Pig	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	CHELLI	15	16	2	2	23	13	0	801	0	0	125	0
2.	MJOLLIEN	24	24	31	34	22	28	0	1485	0	0	222	2
3.	TATTAPHAI	26	21	6	6	7	31	0	761	0	0	190	0
4.	RAMVOH	20	16	0	0	13	20	0	1024	0	15	149	0
5.	PHAIPHUI	27	16	0	0	2	4	0	1302	10	6	203	0
6.	BALADHAN	9	34	12	26	3	1	0	700	0	0	163	0
7.	DUIJUNG	1	0	2	12	17	14	0	350	0	0	110	0
8.	LEIRI	0	8	10	6	2	2	0	577	0	0	121	0
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	0	32	0	0	5	5	0	251	0	0	42	0
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	171	0	0	49	0
		122	162	63	86	94	118	0	7422	10	21	1374	2

Table- VI shows that there are 7422 number of fowls and 1374 number of Pigs. The number of bullocks and cows is also not negligible. Of course, villages of higher altitude lack bullocks as there is no provision for wet-cultivation. People of Ramvoh and Phaiphui have recently started to domesticate pigeons and ducks.

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D. The major industries in the Project Area are weaving and basketry. Weaving is done to meet the self-requirements while the practice of bamboo and cane work is an indispensable part of the day to day life of the people. It is done by almost each of the male persons in the villages in a self-service manner. Besides these, there are a few ladies who have undertaken the tailoring as secondary occupation. The following table shows the household industries in the Project Area.

Table - VII

HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRIES.

Serial No.	VILLAGE	WEAVING	B&C WORK	CARPENTRY	POTTERY	BLACK-SMITHY	SERICULTURE	TAILORING	BEE-KEEPING	TOTAL HOUSEHOLD
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	CHELEI	42	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
2.	MOULLIEN	61	62	-	-	-	-	1	-	62
3.	TATTEPHAI	8	37	-	-	-	-	1	-	37
4.	RAMVOM	36	38	-	-	-	-	2	-	38
5.	PHAIPHUI	42	42	-	-	-	-	4	-	42
6.	BALADHAN	47	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
7.	DUIJUNG	30	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
8.	LEIRI	42	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	15	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	15	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
		338	375	0	0	0	0	8	0	375
		90.1%	100%					2.1%		

The table shows that among the 375 households in the Project Area, in 90.1% weaving is done. All the households have the practice of basketry while there are only 2.1% which have tailoring as small industries. The Project Area lacks carpentry, pottery, blacksmithy, Sericulture and Bee-keeping.

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E. The average annual budget of the Households in general in the Project Area show surplus. The following table represents the statistical position.

Table - VIII.

ANNUAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Sl. No.	VILLAGE	ANNUAL INCOME (IN Rs) TOTAL	ANNUAL INCOME (IN Rs) AVERAGE (Per Household)	ANNUAL EXPENDITURE (INRs) TOTAL	ANNUAL EXPENDITURE (INRs) AVERAGE (Per Household)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	CHELEI	7,22,024.00	15,696.17	5,91,574.00	12,860.30
2.	NUOLLIEN	10,39,983.00	16,773.91	8,66,570.00	13,976.96
3.	TATTEPHAI	6,06,515.00	16,392.29	5,29,460.00	14,309.73
4.	RAMVOI	5,04,115.00	13,266.18	4,71,347.00	12,403.87
5.	PHAIPHUI	7,20,920.00	17,164.76	6,69,272.00	15,935.05
6.	BALADHAN	4,60,437.00	9,592.43	3,51,204.50	7,316.75
7.	DUIJUNG	3,48,749.00	11,624.96	2,83,162.00	9,438.73
8.	LEIRI	6,13,154.00	14,598.90	4,39,196.00	10,457.05
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	1,42,090.00	9,472.66	1,26,105.00	8,407.00
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	1,35,278.00	9,018.53	87,840.00	5,856.00
		52,93,265.00	14,115.37	44,15,730.50	11,775.28

Table VIII indicates that the average annual income per household in the Project Area is Rs. 14,115.37 while the average annual expenditure is Rs. 11,775.28. It makes the people to have surplus budgets.

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The following two tables show the break-ups of annual income and expenditure respectively.

TABLE - IX

ANNUAL INCOME WITH BREAK-UP.
(IN Rs.)

Sl. No.	Village	Land	Cattle	Poultry	Piggery	Fishery
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	CHELEI	347274	13000	25750	45600	2700
2.	MUOLLIEN	626933	21800	39950	70200	0
3.	TATTEPHAI	329865	18800	20600	1500	11150
4.	RAMVOM	282765	21000	27450	63800	0
5.	PHAIPHUI	414020	12500	31950	92500	0
6.	BALADHAN	292337	5700	8700	22500	0
7.	DUIJUNG	191909	6900	10940	9900	0
8.	LEIRI	290069	1800	10975	22250	0
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	56160	4500	4500	3400	0
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	120958	1500	1220	0	0
		2952290	107500	182035	331650	13850

Cottage Industry	Trade & Commerce	Paid Employment	Others	Total
8	9	10	11	12
8000	64400	62900	152400	722024
6200	87400	46700	140800	1039983
35200	47300	63300	78800	606515
5200	42800	18500	42600	504115
1800	67350	18000	82800	720920
500	26500	104200	0	460437
0	19000	16000	94100	348749
0	15800	235640	36620	613154
0	18000	55530	0	142090
0	11600	0	0	135278
56900	400150	620770	628120	5293265

The above table shows the break-up of the annual income in the villages covered by the Project Area. It indicates that out of total income of Rs. 52,93,265.00 per annum, the major amount of Rs. 29,52,250.00 comes from land i.e. agricultural activities. Fishery is the lowest earning source in the Project Area.

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TABLE - X.
ANNUAL EXPENDITURE WITH BREAK-UP
(in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Village	Food	Dress	Education	Medical	Beverage	Tabacco	betelnut	Travelling	Land Revenue
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	CHELEI	351775	61050	19000	8350	1500	7450	7100	13500	3119
2.	MUOLLIEN	542680	80210	30175	14120	600	12750	11400	18200	820
3.	TATTEPHAI	314500	59300	10800	7100	200	8200	8700	10700	190
4.	RAMVOM	291500	46900	8400	7550	500	7550	6950	10500	237
5.	PHAIPHUI	418600	63000	20750	10200	300	9100	9350	15900	222
6.	BALADHAN	254175	18725	4325	3965	280	5150	4600	5490	784.50
7.	DUIJUNG	184743	15100	4725	3900	3650	3100	3150	4700	184
8.	LEIRI	293850	31040	7550	6625	700	5250	4275	12350	216
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	81355	5850	3050	2600	50	1610	1350	1500	70
10.	N.HMAR LUSHAI	74000	2860	400	170	0	1200	1325	150	75
		2807178	384035	109175	64580	7780	61360	58200	92990	5917.50

Contd 22/-

Table -X Contd.

Sl. No.	Village	Festival	Other Social organization	Utensils	Radio	Watch	Bicycle	T.V.	Amusement
		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1.	CHELEI	13725	4100	6700	1450	2250	1000	0	6200
2.	MUOLLIEN	18520	4150	6370	2000	5300	2300	0	9070
3.	TATTEPHAI	8000	4450	4400	0	2400	0	0	5720
4.	RAMVOM	9360	3300	3650	600	400	1200	0	5640
5.	PHAIPHUI	11390	3800	5820	2220	2500	1100	0	7150
6.	BALADHAN	11575	100	3140	400	1220	0	0	2400
7.	DUIJUNG	8800	500	3170	0	0	0	4000	2350
8.	LEIRI	16150	1350	4185	2250	1100	0	0	2100
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	4800	150	2170	450	0	0	0	1100
10.	N. HMAR LUSHAI	800	0	50	0	600	0	0	100
		103120	21900	39655	9370	15770	5600	4000	41830

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Table - X Contd.

Sl. No.	Village	Residence Building	Furniture	Litigation	Toilet	Kerosine	Purchase of land	Others	Total
		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1.	CHELEI	41150	4400	0	5100	16475	0	16180	581574
2.	MUOLLIEN	44200	6800	0	8055	21700	900	26250	866570
3.	TATIEPHAI	37800	2500	0	5650	13100	0	25750	529460
4.	RAMVOM	26200	3950	0	5790	11750	0	19420	471347
5.	PHAIPHUI	36000	7820	0	7250	14550	0	22250	669272
6.	BALADHAN	13485	2650	0	2040	12700	0	4000	351204.50
7.	DUIJUNG	23650	2450	0	2650	9940	0	2400	283162
8.	LEIRI	22200	3800	0	3240	12875	0	8090	439196
9.	P.HMAR LUSHAI	8300	2000	0	1250	5700	0	2750	126105
10.	L. HMAR LUSHAI	1000	0	0	310	4300	0	500	87840
		253985	36370	0	41335	123090	900	127590	4415730.50

Table -X shows the break-up of the annual expenditure of the villages in the Project Area. It says that the major expenses are made for food, dress, shelter and education. The expenditure for conspicuous consumption is relatively lower. A very striking feature in this table is that practically nothing is spent in the name of litigation or purchasing of land.

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CHAPTER - III

The Problem and Possible Solutions:

Why jhum has been regarded as a 'problem'? It has been mentioned at the outset of Chapter I that jhuming involves slash burn technique. In this technique, a plot of land is selected and the vegetation covering it is cut and felled. When the cut trees are sun-dried, fire is set on them and the ash is again allowed to remain exposed to open sky. After rain comes, the land is prepared with hoe and seeds are sown. The ash acts as fertilizer. Moreover, often multiple crop is grown in the jhumland to stabilize the fertility. Of course, no harvest provides good yield after two or three years of continuous activities. That is why the cultivator has to search for another plot to turn it into a jhumland. He will again return to the original plot after a period of five years or even more, until it is covered by fresh vegetation.

So far this Project is concerned, the act of jhuming has been made responsible largely for two 'offences' -- first, it causes deforestation that has the cumulative effect of soil erosion and flood in the plains area ; Secondly, it makes people, who practise it, economically weak. The first among these two allegations has got an universal dimension as it is concerned with ecological crisis. The second one is a special problem for the tribal people practising jhum and at present, it is a problem for the people in the Project Area.

Now, the question is, how far it is true that the economic backwardness of the people concerned is due to jhum-practice ! If we look at the land-holding pattern in the Project Area, we find that 2749 bighas of land is used for jhuming (i.e. 57.3% of the total household land) against 922 bighas (19.2%) used for wet cultivation (See Table V). The

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break up shown in the table also speaks of the fact that the economy in the Project Area is largely based upon jhuming.

On the other hand, if we refer to Table VIII, we find that the average annual income per household in the Project Area is Rs. 14,115.37 (i.e Rs. 1176.28 p.m.). So far the existing conditions are concerned, it cannot be considered as 'insufficient' income. Moreover, the negligible percentage of indebtedness among the people further provides the assurance that jhum is not the lone factor leading to the apparent economic backwardness of the people. Still, it cannot be denied that the present economic condition can be uplifted through other occupations that is more profitable than jhum.

As the eco-system is to be protected from hayards and the upliftment of the economic status of the people in the Project Area has been desired, let us consider the alternatives that could replace jhum and find out their feasibility for the prupose.

A. WET CULTIVATION:

From Tables IV & V it is evident that 29.6% of the total houscholds in the Project Area practise wet cultivation (2.9% practise wet-cultivation alone), 19.2% of the total household land is under wet cultivation. It is relevent to note that the households practising wet cultivation are from the villages situated in relatively lower areas. The people have utilized all the plots that are suitable for wet cultivation. It has been mentioned earlier that terrances have been made too wherever necessary and possible either.

To achieve a profitable goal, the people must be provided with suitable land to opt for wet cultivation. There are two possible ways. Either the people must be shifted to the plain areas and be provided with settlement there, or to develop plataeus and terraces in surrounding of

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the people-itself. The former solution is not an 'easy' one as the shifted people would face a psychological disturbance in their new habitat. Generations would be required for adjustment. The second one, on the other hand, is a 'costly' affair as it would involve massive man-power and technological applications. Moreover, it would cause wide-spread deforestation and soil erosion leading to an ecological crisis.

B. Animal Husbandry :

There is much potentiality for development of two enterprises in the Project Area - (a) Poultry and Piggery (b) Dairy. As per Table-VI there are 7422 fowls and 1374 pigs (on the day of survey) in the Area. It indicates the familiarity of the people with both fowl and pig rearing. On the other hand, the number of cattle and buffaloes is also not negligible. As the people do not consume milk due to traditional dictation, an avenue towards dairy enterprise can be opened up. Of course, it would be possible in the lower villages where cattle-rearing is present.

But, to turn all these into reality, an extensive infrastructure would be required. First of all, to be more profitable than jhuming, there must be a suitable market that would let the people to earn a sufficient-cum-steady income. Secondly, for transportation of goods, there must be an improved communication system. It will further help in the development of various necessary aspects in a cummulative manner - such as, veterinary centres, animal feed outlets etc. There is already a veterinary sub-centre at Boro-Arkup serving the Project Area.

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C. Fruit Orchard:

A very significant aspect of the total economy in the Project Area is the production of fruits in large scales (see previous chapter). Improved communication and Financial assistance would help the interested households to develop well-maintained profitable orchards. During the survey, a major number of households expressed their interest regarding fruit orchards.

D. Cottage industry and fishery cannot help much regarding replacement of jhum. As per Table VII the two major industries are weaving and basketry. The sale of the products of these industries, if developed into enterprises, would require a sophisticated handling with a more sophisticated market. Moreover, lack of electricity obstructs the mechanization. It would obviously take time. Sericulture is absent in the valley.

On the other hand, only 8 households in the Project Area have fisheries. All of them are from the villages that are situated in relatively lower altitude. The other areas are not suitable for fishery.

From the above account, several alternatives have been found for replacement of jhum. The execution of these alternatives would require a separate concern to look after the entire operation. It may be mentioned that the currently existing LAMPS (Co-operative society) would be of great help in this regard.

The Cultural Factor:

The 'problem' we are dealing with has got another dimension. Though apparently the problem of jhuming is an economic one, basically it is deeply rooted in the 'culture'

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of the people concerned. To be more precise, it is a socio-economic problem. For the student of culture economic system is one of many different aspects of its 'culture'. From the anthropological point of view "culture refers to the whole range of human activities which are learned and not instinctive, and which are transmitted from generation to generation through learning processes" (Beattie, 1966). Culture is universal in man's experience, but the expressions of cultural activities differ from society to society. Each aspect of culture, including economic systems, is inter-related with the other as all of them are designed to fit a common framework, which again is designed to face a specific social and geographic environmental set-up.

Jhuming is a cultural practice as it has been sorted out as the most efficient production method of all the possibilities by the collective experience of the concerned societies. That is why it is often referred to as an "age-old" method.

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CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

The Resume :

In this concluding chapter, let us have a resume of the previous account as well as a clear picture regarding the solution that can be taken as the most effective for the problem under consideration.

So far the people and the area are concerned, we have found that -

* The population of Jinam-Valley has a multi-ethnic composition. The three tribes inhabiting the area are the Hmars, the Zeme Nagas and the Kukis.

* Christianity is the major religion in the Area(92%).

* Except Chelei, the villages covered by the Project Area are situated on the hill slopes ranging from 300 to 1300 metres (approx.). The only means of communication in the Area is 'walking'.

* Due to the Christian background as well as a good literacy percentage (50.2%) the people in the Valley are a bit 'open-minded'.

As we turn to their economy, we find that -

* The people in the Area are basically agriculturists and largely depend upon jhum (93% of the total households).

* For their 'open minded' nature, as indicated just now, the people have begun to understand the drawbacks of jhuming. Hence, they have done wet-cultivation wherever possible, even by constructing terraces. Which is more significant is that they have developed fruit orchards that provide them a steady income.

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*The people practise poultry and piggery, which is a part of their tradition too. Still, they are unable to enterprise these occupations in a large scale due to lack of communication and other allied facilities.

While considering the alternatives that could replace jhum, three of them were spotted - wet cultivation (either by shifting the people to plains or by 'constructing' suitable plots in the surroundings), animal husbandry, orchards, But to execute them two things must be given special attention --- the cultural background and the infrastructural facilities such as communication, electricity etc.

It has also been emphasized that inspite the understanding of the various drawbacks of jhuming the people are practising it. The core reason of this behaviour is the fact that jhum is not an economic problem alone, it is a socio--economic problem. That is why provision of suitable land for wet cultivation or facilities for other alternatives would not make it easy for the people to switch-over immediately. It would be a time consuming process.

A Suggestion :

There may be a suggestion for an effective solution to the problem of jhum-control. The multiple increase in the jhumiya population has made the practise of jhuming to cause widespread deforestation. To restrict the movement of the jhumiyas for their harvest within a limited area, there can be taken up two measures --- application of manure that can keep the plot fertile for a longer period and the application of appropriate crop-rotation system that too helps the soil to retain its fertility for a number of cycles. Of course, such elements are to be worked out for this purpose. It would give rise to a new

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technique ---- 'sedentary jhum'. By allotting two or three plots to each household in proportion to its size, the movement of the jhumiyas could be controlled and it would further arrest deforestation as well as other subsequent ecological hazards. The cultural barrier could also be minimized through this system.

Moreover, improved communication and other infrastructural facilities would help the people to undertake other enterprises simultaneously and thus, their economic status could be uplifted.

Epilogue:

The Mini compact Area Jhum control Project is a development scheme undertaken by the Authorities concerned. 'jhum' has been made responsible for the economic backwardness of the people and by controlling jhum this project aims to uplift the economic status of the jhumiya people. In other words it desires to help the people to develop. But, the most important question at this point is- what is the standard that form the baseline between developed and underdeveloped status ?

Of course, it is not an easy question to answer. However, a development project should always aim at inducing such undertakings that would actually bring welfare for the people concerned. It is noteworthy that better consumption not necessarily lead to a better human being. The core idea of development should be the upliftment of the total way of life, not standard of living.

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Let us wind up with the statements made by Pandit Nehru when he wrote about tribal development.[1] Two of the five statements he had made are very much significant and relevant concerning the general scenario of Indian development. According to him, people should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them ; secondly, we should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

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1. Nehru, J. 1959 : Foreword in A Philosophy for NEFA Verrier Elwin, Shillong, Research Department NEFA.